

Appl. No.: 10/034,817  
Amendment Dated December 19, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of September 26, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

- 1 - 2 (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 2 ~~[[1]]~~, including at least one additional layer located between said first and second ~~fibrous~~ layers of carded staple fibers.
4. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 3, wherein at least one additional layer comprises meltblown microfibers.
5. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 2 ~~[[1]]~~, wherein the first ~~fibrous~~ layer comprises from 10 to 100 percent by weight of said bicomponent or biconstituent fibers.
- 6 - 8 (Cancelled) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second fibrous layers is a spunbonded web.
9. (Previously Amended) A nonwoven fabric which comprises:  
a first layer of carded staple fibers defining one outer surface of the fabric;  
a second layer of carded staple fibers defining an opposite outer surface of the fabric; and  
a pattern of discrete fusion bonds bonding the fibers of the first layer and the fibers of the second layer to form a coherent multi-layer fabric;  
the fibers of the first layer comprising a substantially homogeneous blend of polypropylene staple fibers and polyethylene/polypropylene bicomponent or biconstituent staple fibers in which the polyethylene component is present at the surface of the fibers; and  
the fibers of the second layer comprising polypropylene staple fibers,  
wherein said fusion bonds are formed by passing the fabric through a calender nip defined between a smooth calender roll and a patterned calender roll, and wherein said bonds exhibit on said one outer surface a relatively non-indented configuration resulting from contact

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with said smooth calender roll, and wherein the bonds on said opposite surface of the fabric exhibit a relatively indented embossed configuration resulting from contact with said patterned calender roll.

10. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein said first and second layers of fibers are bonded directly to one another by said thermal bonds.

11. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein the fibers of the first layer comprise a blend of polypropylene staple fibers and polyethylene-polypropylene sheath-core bicomponent fibers in which the polyethylene component is the sheath and the polypropylene component is the core.

12. (Original) A nonwoven fabric according to claim 9, wherein said first layer comprises from 40% to 100% by weight of said sheath core bicomponent fibers and from 0 to 60% by weight of said polypropylene fibers, and wherein said first layer of fibers comprises approximately 40% to 60% by weight of said fabric.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Amended) A nonwoven fabric which comprises:  
a first layer of carded staple fibers defining one outer surface of the fabric;  
a second layer of carded staple fibers defining an opposite outer surface of the fabric; and  
a pattern of discrete thermal bonds bonding the fibers of the first layer and the fibers of the second layer to form a coherent multi-layer fabric;  
the fibers of the first layer comprising a substantially homogeneous blend of about 50% by weight polypropylene staple fibers and 50% by weight polyethylene/polypropylene sheath-core bicomponent staple fibers; and  
the fibers of the second layer comprising 100% polypropylene staple fibers,  
wherein said bonds are formed by passing the fabric through a calender nip defined between a smooth calender roll and a patterned calender roll, and wherein said bonds exhibit on said one outer surface a relatively non-indented configuration resulting from contact

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with said smooth calender roll, and wherein the bonds on said opposite surface of the fabric exhibit a relatively indented embossed configuration resulting from contact with said patterned calender roll.

15. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising two nonwoven fabrics according to claim 9 [[1]], positioned with said one outer surface thereof in opposing face-to-face contact with one another and including a zone of thermal fusion defining a seam joining the two fabrics together.

16 – 20 (Cancelled)